



Memories of Yesterday



DUXBURY CLIPPER
MAY 7, 1953

According to a ledger found by Richard Mann in one of his houses on Winter St., in 1835 Duxbury school teachers of "School District No. 4" in West Duxbury received \$2-a-week plus board, which cost \$1.50-a-week. Six members of the 11-man school board of the fourth district had the surname of Chandler.

You may scoff at a \$2 salary, but remember that in 1835 you could buy a broom for 16c and a cord of pine cut to stove size for \$2.50 (a cord of oak was \$5). School children used a dipper to drink from a well. A new dipper in 1844 cost 12c.

When there was to be a school district meeting the district clerk posted one warrant at the school house, a second at the Tree of Knowledge (where the stagecoach stopped with the mail) and a third at "the store of Ruth Delano's."

In 1842 some work was done on our school house: "First to turn the house one quarter round and have the door in the end and raise the roof to a common pitch roof and new shingle the roof with good pine shingles and new shingle two sides of the walls with good shingle, and all new windows, full size eight by 12 glass and the inside all new with good lumber except the under floor." 'Twas frightfully expensive, you know. All this cost \$266.31. In 1845 the "Prudential Committee" repaired the back house "in the best possible manner." This cost \$2.75.

At that time Duxbury had a sealer of wood, surveyor of lumber, fence viewers, field drivers (we still have the last two), overseer of the poor (in one place we find "overseer work and alms house"), surveyor of highways and, beginning in 1860, a "fire ward." In 1842 there was a notation about the duties of the librarian with this quaint proviso: "No child under 12 shall take a book from the library without a certificate from his parent or guardian." Also, "No one family shall have from the library more than two books at one time."

The Selectmen in 1842 were Benjamin Alden, L. Smith and J. F. Wadsworth.

The day book ends with a notation made on Feb. 24, 1872. On the blank pages are scrawls by an Earl Willcatt who as of February 1914 was in Grade II. The only thing we know about Earl is his unfailing accuracy in arithmetic. There it is: 4 plus 2, plus 3 make 9, clearly scribbled in a day book full of Duxbury history.